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By- Felton, Nadine

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Career lines should be built into the teacher aide program of each school system. Such a scaled program would enable an aide to attain full professional status in definite stages within a reasonable length of time. However, teacher aides, on the whole, lack a previous orientation toward a career, are not prepared for competitive college admission, do not have the financial resources to attend college full time, and might be discouraged by the length of time required to earn a degree at night school. Therefore, the "Career Incentive Plan" proposes that an aide's knowledge of the disadvantaged environment, his ability to communicate with the residents, and his work experience as an aide be considered for partial credit toward a B.A. degree in education. The plan also proposes a one-fifth study program to enable an aide to complete 16 college credits yearly toward degree requirements. A tuition fund would be needed, however, because aides are not usually eligible for scholarships. Federal education acts might be amended to provide scholarships for these students on a part-time basis and to enable universities to develop special curriculums. (NH)

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CAREER INCENTIVE PLAN

FOR

HIGHER EDUCATION

OF

NON-PROFESSIONALS

Nadine Felton
Research Analyst

New Careers Development Center
New York University
Washington Square
New York, New York 10003

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Concern grows daily in all sectors of society because of the shortages of professionals in the human services (health, education and welfare). In education alone a deficit of 500,000 teachers for public elementary and secondary schools will exist by 1970, with this total expected to grow in proportion to the number of youngsters entering school each year thereafter.

One means to help remedy this lack of teachers has been found in the employment of non-professionals as Teacher Aides. By the end of 1967, more than 116,000 persons will be working in this capacity under Title I of ESEA alone. The growing numbers of Teacher Aide personnel led the National Education Association recently to allocate funds to consider establishing a national association of Teacher Aides which will be an affiliate of NEA.

The effectiveness of aides in improving the quality of teaching has been noted by many experts:

> A report by the House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee states that non-professionals are increasing teacher productivity. As the Aide relieves the teacher of a wide variety of duties now unnecessarily burdening him, the latter is freed to spend more time in his professional capacity meeting the individual learning needs of the pupils.
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> The Bank Street College of Education recently made a nation-wide study of teacher aides, teacher assistants, family workers and other auxiliary educational personnel employed from California to Puerto Rico. It found "great possibilities in the professional-non-professional team in enabling the teacher to meet individual needs of pupils." The multi-level approach was found to provide "an escape from rigid structuring in the classroom... with more small groupings and independent activities possible." The report says that any classroom can benefit from "effective utilization of auxiliaries, regardless of the composition of the school population or the socio-economic background of the auxiliaries."

However, although the employment of Teacher Aides has proved valuable, greater efforts are needed to solve the lack of certified teachers. An important step in this direction was the passage in 1966 of the Scheuer Amendment (now New Careers Amendment) to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 which aside from providing for in-service training for non-professionals employed in the human services, has the higher goal of opening up career opportunities for them and motivating them to attain professional standing.

A NEW PATH TO TEACHING

So that schools and society can benefit from the full professional potential of Teacher Aides, career lines must be built into the Teacher Aide program of each school system. Such a scaled program could permit the Aide to advance by stages toward full professional standing. His usefulness is enhanced as an educator as a result of his training. Pioneer work has already been done in this direction:

> San Francisco Community College in cooperation with Oakland Calif. Board of Education offers a work-study program for Teacher Aides, which includes two credits per semester for night courses at the college and three credits per semester for work experience. The program will be expanded to include Aides employed under a combined ESEA and Scheuer program at a local junior high school. The College is working with the Board to develop a career line from Teacher Aide to Assistant Teacher (requiring an Associate of Arts degree). Also, the College is discussing with a local four-year institution a program to enable Teacher Assistants to continue studying for a B.A. degree and certification as teachers.
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> The Newark New Careers program contracted with Farleigh-Dickenson University to offer aides in human service agencies college courses at the job site, on job time, and for credit toward a degree at the University. Similar arrangements are being made between the Public Service Careers Project of New York's Human Resources Administration and the City University of New York.

Since many aides have less than high school, and most have no college education, they would need at least five or six years to obtain a BA degree, were they able to attend college full time in the traditional fashion. But, of course, full time schooling is out of the question for a family breadwinner whose only source of income is a $4,000 a year job at which he must work full time. If he follows the typical evening college course of study, an aide can expect that it will take him eight years to obtain a BA, or even longer if he has to complete a high school education first. Thus the road to a college degree can be discouragingly long, unless the aide works within a program specifically tailored to his needs.

The struggle for acceptance by a college is rigorously competitive and the life experience and previous schooling of many persons now working as aides have not oriented them toward academic pursuits, hence they may at first fear that they may not be able to cope with college studies.

If nonprofessionals with good potential as teachers are to be realistically activated to embark on a teaching career, a way must be found which will permit them to attain their degrees within a reasonable length of time, and which will allow them to make use of their valuable life experience, while at the same time making it possible for them to continue to meet their obligations as heads of families.

THE ONE-FIFTH STUDY PLAN

The above analysis of obstacles to traditional academic study for persons working as Teacher Aides shows these to be: lack of previous orientation toward a career, competitive struggle for entry into college, the overwhelming length of time required to complete

a traditional night-college program toward a degree, the high cost of higher education and the low earnings of non-professionals. The Career Incentive Plan for Teacher Aides propounds a solution to meet these difficulties.

This Career Incentive Plan proposes that a Teacher Aide's life experience (his knowledge of the disadvantaged environment, and his ability to communicate with the disadvantaged) and his work experience in the educational field be considered as partial accreditation toward the completion of course work for a BA degree in education.

Further, to make it possible for him to continue working at his job and supporting himself and his dependents, the Plan proposes that one-fifth or eight hours of Aide's working week be set aside so that he can attend college courses at the job site, if possible; or at special centers for such instruction, or at a nearby cooperating college.

These courses should be structured so that the aide could clearly grasp the relationship between theory and his practical experience. Such an approach is particularly useful for persons who have had negative experiences with regard to education and require a transitional stage to assist them back into the academic mainstream.

Under the one-fifth study plan, an aide could complete 16 college credits yearly toward the 126 credits required for a BA degree: 12 credits in Fall and Spring; 4 in summer sessions, accumulating 80 credits in 5 years, exclusive of credit for work experience. Additional credits can be assigned for work experience similar to

credits that were given to World War II veterans for their military service or to the system followed at Antioch, Bard and a number of other colleges where students are given college credit for supervised work in the field. As an aide gains strength in mastering academic techniques, he may take additional evening courses, and occasionally complete a full summer session of 12 credits, thus obtaining his degree in less than 6 years.

The Career Incentive Model for on-the-job higher education is equally feasible for other professions, both in public service and in private industry which already uses similar programs for training higher management.

Scholarships are generally limited today to those with a high level of achievement in high school. They are specifically designed for young people, require that the recipient attend school full time and frown on more than 20 hours of work per week. Therefore, scholarship winners must count on support from their families and should not have dependents. Scholarships, then are out of reach for Teacher Aides who are mostly in their mid-thirties, have children, and must earn a livelihood.

The Career Line tuition fund would eliminate this implicit discrimination and would enrich society by creating a vast new resource of certified teachers who combine modern educational skills with special wisdom for working with disadvantaged youngsters which has resulted from their own life experience and job based training. The economy would continue to benefit from the tax contributions of aides while they pursue their studies, since they would continue to work full time and earn their salaries.

One can assume that a Teacher Aide working for a college degree would have a very high level of motivation because of his maturity, and that his desire to become a teacher rests on a firm foundation because he has already had first hand experience as an educator. Since he would require the recommendation of his immediate supervisors in order to receive the scholarship, his potential as a teacher would already have been tested and evaluated.

Educators frequently lament the dearth of male teachers in public schools. The Career Line scholarship plan would provide a way for supplying this lack. In discussing the need for more men in the various Aides programs, a recent study[1] states:

> ". . . the salary levels for men who tend to be the sole . . . support in their families, creates considerable conflict in the men. . . They like the work; they see job satisfaction as a major compensation for the low salaries; but they are having such difficulty making ends meet that many . . . feel they will have to find less satisfying jobs that pay a little better.
>
> "Most of the men try to resolve this conflict by looking forward to being upgraded within the job. . . <u>they hope this will come about from being promoted within the job after they have had more training and experience</u>. This gives some urgency to the whole matter of upgrading of which there is very little"[1]

The upgrading opportunities would be present in jobs with career lines, for as the Teacher Aide acquired education and rises to assistant teacher and associate teacher, his salary would be increased accordingly.

The study goes on to say:

> "Since it is unlikely that greatly increased salaries will be available for untrained personnel . . . the educational opportunity should be used as a reward and as part of the upgrading procedures. (Anyone entering such an educational program should regard himself and be regarded by his peers

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[1] <u>A Study of the Nonprofessional in the CAP,</u> Prepared for the Office of Economic Opportunity, Daniel Yankelovitch, Inc. New York, N.Y. 1966. (Underlining, ours.)

as having received a significant promotion.)"

Legislation already exists within the National Defense Education Act of 1958 which can be amended to provide scholarships for potential teachers now working as Teacher Aides. The Act establishes Fellowships for college graduates, giving preference to those who would enter the teaching profession at institutions for higher learning. (The provisions are that the fellow must maintain a satisfactory grade level, and dedicate his full time to study or research.)

We propose that this Act be amended so that carefully selected Teacher Aides be awarded scholarships to study on a part-time basis, while continuing to work in their nonprofessional capacity. If a scale were built into their jobs, as they advance in their training as teachers, they could assume more responsibilities as educators (Assistant Teachers, Associate Teachers, Certified Teachers) with corresponding salary increases.

Cost of such a scholarship program is minimal, estimated at $11,200,000, projected on the basis of $560 yearly for 20,000 Teacher Aides.*

NEW CAREERS CURRICULA

The existing New Careers Program provides an ideal framework for innovations and accreditation for adults. It creates the opportunity for universities to work with social agencies (schools, health and social welfare departments) in preparing special curricula for each job category which would be administered by the universities.

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* Career Line scholarships must of course be tax exempt, nor should they affect any allotments the aide may be receiving in the form of Social Security, Aid to Dependent Children, veteran's pensions, G.I. benefits, or his rental of public housing.

A college does not have to spend large sums to provide special curricula or on-site programs for nonprofessionals. This can be done in certain cases without raising tuition rates. (San Francisco City College and Farleigh-Dickinson University charge regular tuition for their on-site and work-related special courses.) On-site courses avoid the expense of creating new space for the additional students besides providing instruction to them in a familiar setting.

Colleges which could not within their existing budgets absorb the cost of setting up special programs for Teacher Aides, would be encouraged to do so if they could apply for funds under the Career Line Scholarship program.

The fund would permit interested universities to:

1. Employ additional instructors.
2. Engage consultants on methods of teaching nonprofessionals.
3. Develop special curricula for work-related programs.
4. Hire additional administrative help.
5. Provide supportive services for career line students.

This funding, like the scholarship program, could be an extension of existing legislation. The Higher Education Amendments of 1967 (HR 6232 - Title I) already provide for:

> "sums to make grants to or contracts with institutions of higher education to pay all or part of the cost of . . . pilot projects in the fields of community service or continuing education, with emphasis on innovative approaches and on the promotion of comprehensiveness and coordination in these fields."

and in Title V:

> "to coordinate, broaden and strengthen programs for the training and improvement of the qualifications of teachers and other educational personnel for all levels of the American educational system . . . to improve the quality of teaching and to help meet critical shortages of adequately trained

> educational personnel by . . . (2) providing a broad range of high quality training and retraining opportunities, responsive to changing manpower needs; (3) attracting a greater number of qualified persons into the teaching profession; . . . and (5) helping to make educational personnel training programs more responsive to the needs of the schools and colleges."

CONCLUSION

Career oriented education has many advantages; mainly, that it is more than typical on-the-job vestibule training which is directed towards assisting the aide to learn his job and perform it more efficiently. Career oriented education requires definite time off the job on a Training Day, focused towards building systematic knowledge and understanding. Its cost is extremely low -- $560 per year for each Teacher Aide.. In addition, career oriented education has the advantage of helping to solve the nation's critical shortage of trained teachers. As the Teacher Aide progresses with his course work, he will be able increasingly to supplement the teacher's instructional work, such as tutoring slow readers while the teacher works with the other students. Career oriented education also offers a specific route for the individual who must acquire a college education while working. The goal is careers, not simply jobs, and the design reflects this policy.